

Reds Building Up A 'Knight' to Stir Revolt in Panama

By PEGGY POOR

Special to the N. Y. Journal-American

PANAMA, Feb. 19.—As the Organization of American States' "peace group" returned today to Washington without reaching any concrete on-the-scene solution to the crisis with the U.S., informed circles here warned that a Communist "front" is grooming Jorge Lluca as Panama's next "knight" (on a Red horse.)

This grooming, plus the OAS failure to reach any acceptable solution, sharpens dangers of further rioting, if not outright bloody revolution in a trigger-tense atmosphere of stalled economy and hysterical national fanaticism.

Chief weakness of the Communists to date is said to have been the lack of a capable leader around whom the mob could rally. They apparently now feel they have such a leader in Lluca, a former Panamanian delegate to the United Nations, and the Reds are believed to have formed a "League for the Recovery and Defense of National Sovereignty" around his personality.

CHIEF AGITATOR

In this, they have been immensely helped by the "League's" Secretary General, Victor Avila, student agitator primarily blamed as one of the chief leaders of the January rioting, and reportedly identified as a "graduate" of Cuban guerilla training.

Qualified sources indicate the league is supplied with outright grants of funds from Cuba, and point to the clear Communist propaganda line Avila was able to foment during last weekend's first league "Congress" held in Panama University—long a center for Red agitation.

Lluca, former president of the University's Law College, is said to be the "hub" of the new Communist "sympathy movement." He is also active in the leadership of a clique of student extremists in their late 40s, who themselves are among the top organizers of the so-called "student front."

Observers here, however, are

still hopeful that Lluca lacks both the ultimate strength and "color" needed to compete with Panamanian "strongman" Arnulfo Arias, if the latter attempts to contest the mob and Lluca's student following.

Failure by the OAS peace mission to solve the crisis is reported due to persistent intransigence on the part of the Panamanian Administration. A spokesman for the Chiari regime here emphatically denies the existence of any "secret memorandum."

Quite the contrary. Qualified sources report increasing concern on the part of the Panamanians as evidence that the OAS is on the point of releasing a picture of the situation absolving the U. S.

So, expect Panama to try the case in the propaganda forum provided by the United Nations.

OUTBREAK FEARED

However, experts warn that the authorities may not be able to contain the hysterical mob more than a couple of weeks more. After that an explosion is expected which will probably boomerang against the so-called "rulers" and the upper classes.

Although Lluca's "League" claims the support of some 300 splinter groups across the country, the paucity of token contributions received at its headquarters is interpreted as showing not only reluctance on the part of these "supporters," but a mounting fear among all Panamanians that things are going from bad to worse.

All sources, incidentally, believe that arms are available to the Panamanian "rebels."

OAS (OAS)
Lluca, Jorge
League for the
Recovery &
Defense of
National
Sovereignty

Pol 2-05.1 Panama/Cuba
Pol 2-05.1 Cuba/Panama
I-37-02 Panama